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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of anti-Americanism is presented as an assortment of apparently disparate expressions of hostility toward U.S. society which combine to reinforce one another. Chapter 1 discusses what is not anti-Americanism, including: (1) opposition to particular U.S. policies or administration; (2) reassessment by foreign publics and elites of where power lies or is likely to lie in the world; (3) attempts to pressure the United States in order to gain some national advantage; or (4) the enduring desire for independence and self-determination. Chapter 2 examines primitive anti-Americanism. Chapter 3 investigates the demise of communist anti-Americanism. Chapter 4 discusses the ideological assault against the United States. Chapter 5 explores the attack on middle-American values. Chapter 6 investigates the charge of a fascist United States. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss elitism and the idea of American "purity" against the United States. Chapter 9 explores the future of anti-Americanism. Four appendices include excerpts from the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville, Andrew Hacker, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and George F. Kennan. (RSL)

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The Varieties of Anti-Americanism

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The Varieties of Anti-Americanism

Reflex and Response

Stephen Haseler

Foreword by Midge Decter

Ethics and Public Policy Center
Washington, D.C.

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Foreword

MIDGE DECTER

WINSTON CHURCHILL RIGHTLY SAID that the United States is the only country in history that become a great power without seeking that status. Now we are a superpower with a heavy responsibility not only for the defense of far-flung allies but also for the maintenance of international stability and order. This role, not of our own choosing, was thrust upon us by historical circumstance.

Perhaps for that reason, it is a role we have played fitfully and reluctantly—now asserting, now shifting course, now retreating—and from which we have more than once revealed a longing to escape.

One thing we have learned in playing this role is that many people in many places, including the United States itself, do not like us, and say outrageous and false things about us—one of the most outrageous being that we are on the verge of turning fascist. Chief among these maligners are, of course, the Soviet rulers and their Communist sycophants and dependents around the globe. What shocked us, however, was that detractors were also to be found among those who seemingly had every reason to be our supporters. We began to fret about our "image" and to allow that worry to influence our policies. And we began to turn upon ourselves, a development whose consequences may be felt both here and abroad for a long time.

Stephen Haseler, a student of political psychology endowed with an all too rare combination of shrewdness and thoughtfulness, has set about to help us understand this phenomenon of anti-Americanism. With brevity and verve, he shows us how an assortment of apparently disparate expressions of hostility to

American society come together and reinforce one another. Whether based in envy of our wealth and power, or in an elitist fear of the openness of our system, or in a nihilist rejection of our bourgeois ethos, anti-Americanism is ultimately, as Mr. Haseler explains, an animosity toward democracy itself.

These reflections by a sympathetic British observer are not only enlightening but extremely useful. To continue to carry our burden of democratic leadership as history cries out for us to do, we must learn not to take anti-Americanism personally—not to be swayed by it in defining our true national interests and imperatives. Stephen Haseler assists us mightily in learning this vital lesson.

Drawing by Dana Fradon
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"It's no fun being a two-bit country if you can't push America around anymore."

CHAPTER ONE

Anti-Americanism: What It Is Not

ANOTHER SPECTER IS HAUNTING the globe—the specter of anti-Americanism. This ghostly presence is more keenly felt in the mid-1980s than at any other time since the United States emerged from the Second World War as a superpower. And it is no passing phenomenon: anti-Americanism is here to stay, as long as the United States retains its powerful role on the world stage. How the country deals with this challenge will be a fundamental test of its superpower status.

America and its friends should be clear about the precise character of this anti-Americanism. In thinking about such an elemental force, they must understand **what it is not**.

1. Anti-Americanism should not be confused with **opposition to particular U.S. policies or administrations**. Certainly anti-Americanism can lie behind opposition to specific policy goals. But history is replete with examples of men and women who, though deeply sympathetic and friendly toward the United States, have honestly disagreed with particular U.S. actions or even with the general direction of U.S. strategic policy.

Winston Churchill is a prime example. Churchill, half-American by blood, was a great believer in Anglo-American cousinhood. Deeply influenced by Lord Bryce's Americanophile 1888 treatise *The American Commonwealth*, he welcomed American world power, and he wanted the United States to succeed. Yet his disagreements not only with specific American war policies but with general U.S. global strategy as it was emerging in 1945 (particularly in relation to the Soviet Union) are now legendary.

Distrust of American leadership and pro-American sentiment often coincide, particularly in Western Europe. Political scientist William Schneider has argued that "Europeans continue to like the United States and believe it is seriously committed to their

security; but they have come to distrust U.S. leadership and judgment."[1] The enduring quality of pro-American sentiment is amply borne out by polling evidence. The United States Information Agency has been commissioning polls of Western European attitudes toward the United States for many years. A striking feature of this polling evidence from 1954 to 1982 is the relative constancy of "favorable" over "unfavorable" opinions. In the four countries surveyed regularly, pro-American sentiment vastly exceeded anti-American sentiment in all polls taken. The July 1982 figures were: *Great Britain*, anti-American 23 per cent, pro-American 52 per cent; *France*, anti- 20 per cent, pro- 48 per cent; *West Germany*, anti- 14, pro- 38; and *Italy*, anti- 18, pro- 51.

Other recent findings underscore this point. A 1983 Gallup Poll for *Newsweek* magazine covered a wide spectrum: France, West Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Brazil, and Mexico. In each country those polled "approved of the American people by a wide margin. Further, in each country except France, the response showed substantial approval of the American way of life."[2]

Polls confirm the evidence provided by those who vote with their feet by immigrating to the United States (and by those who desire to do so but cannot). Yet, as Schneider has suggested, this general public approval of the American way of life co-exists with a skepticism about U.S. judgment in current world problems. The 1983 *Newsweek* poll that found such widespread approval of the American way of life also revealed that among the six countries polled, only the Brazilians "approved—by a bare 31 to 29 per cent—of U.S. government policy."[3] Considerable evidence shows also that skepticism about American policy judgments is more pronounced among the young and the better educated.

2. None of this, however, should be confused with anti-Americanism. Nor should anti-Americanism be assumed to be the motive behind **reassessments by foreign publics and elites of where power lies or is likely to lie in the world**. Peoples and nations want to survive. Many American sympathizers throughout the world have reluctantly concluded that the United States has lost its will to act as a superpower or, at the very least, is

considering alternative geostrategic roles for its future. Many see the United States as the declining power in the world and the Soviet Union as the ascendant. In these circumstances, prudence often dictates a different course than preference. Such prudent considerations, easily characterized as opportunistic, have little to do with ideological or cultural preference.

Who is winning? Who is strong? Who is weak? These questions are asked about the superpowers daily, weekly, yearly—and often subconsciously—by elites and publics the world over. And what is called anti-Americanism (but is not necessarily that at all) has grown markedly since the American defeat in Vietnam, and since the United States itself proclaimed, virtually as official doctrine, its reduced global capacities and political will during the years of détente.

Conversely, the Reagan administration's attempt to reassert American authority and power in the world—certainly to abandon the rhetoric of détente—may be causing a further reaction that has little to do with anti-American sentiment and everything to do with fears about instability and war. For one side to attempt to re-establish the *status quo ante* creates fear in a way that the gradual tipping of the balance by the other side did not do. A depressing fact revealed by the *Newsweek* poll is that most of the world's publics outside the United States think "a strong American military presence around the world tends to increase the chances of war."[4]

The fear of war is particularly evident in Europe. It is induced partly by the belief that the credibility of deterrence has eroded because, in an age of superpower nuclear "rough equivalence" and Soviet conventional supremacy, the American guarantee to Western Europe is no longer inviolate. This genuine fear of war held by large segments of the European public is often wrongly perceived as anti-Americanism. Certainly the West European pacifist and neutralist movements are deeply hostile to the United States; anti-Americanism is part of their governing impulse. However, the wider European and also Third World anxiety about war often leads to a mentality of accommodation or appeasement that is value-free: the Soviet Union is to be appeased not because it is preferable to the United States but because it seems stronger.

It is important to remember that the Soviet Union remains the preeminent military and political power on the European continent.

3. Another type of behavior that should not be seen as anti-American is **the attempt, particularly by states in the Western-oriented Third World, to pressure the United States in order to gain some national advantage, usually economic**. For example, in the global debt crisis various Third World nations have attempted to raise the specter of a repayment moratorium or default on debts owed to Western banks. Even a debtors' "cartel" has been threatened. Some of America's allies routinely make threats of realignment in the global power balance in order to obtain their own goals.

Such behavior is the small change of international politics in a bi-polar world and should be seen as a manifestation of the politics of national advantage rather than anti-Americanism. Even when the United States is abused in international forums by pro-Western Third World elites, it usually has little to do with anti-American feeling; rather, such abuse is based on an assessment that the United States is more vulnerable to threats than the Soviet Union and more likely to yield to demands.

4. Just as calculations about national advantage should be distinguished from anti-Americanism, so too should **the enduring desire for independence and self-determination**. Although much of the rhetoric of "national liberation" is a thin disguise for Soviet-inspired coups or indigenous Marxist-Leninist revolutionary behavior, Third World regimes from time to time and for various reasons do genuinely believe they are becoming overly dependent upon the United States. Hence they may react in a manner that seems hostile to Washington but is really an attempt to gain a feeling of control over their own destiny. Even in a highly interdependent world where local security is inextricably bound up with the supporting superpower, self-determination retains its allure.

In the Third World, opposition factions seeking power may use anti-American posturing simply as a rhetorical weapon, signify-

ing nothing by way of ideological preference. There is no more powerful emotional weapon to wield against a pro-Western elite than to accuse it of being a "puppet" of Washington. And there is no surer way for an insurgent group to secure Soviet backing against an incumbent regime than to drape itself in anti-American colors. Third World political infighting is replete with charges that the ruling elite is in the pocket of Washington; to force this elite out of power the opposition needs to establish its anti-American credentials, though they may be baseless.

Recent events in the Philippines follow this pattern. Following the assassination of the opposition leader Benigno Aquino, a coalition opposed to President Marcos emerged. This group, the National Alliance for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy, was said by the *New York Times* to have strong "anti-American" overtones,[5] and it is skillfully exploiting what is described as the "U.S.-Marcos dictatorship." This coalition, which no doubt includes many genuinely anti-American fellow travelers, extreme nationalists, and the like, also includes many who are in no real sense anti-American. However, in order to define themselves and gain support, these "out" groups march under the banner of anti-Americanism. This pattern of functional "anti-Americanism" is further developed as the "ins" defend themselves by developing an anti-American posture all their own.

CHAPTER TWO

Primitive Anti-Americanism

ANTI-AMERICANISM MAY BE DEFINED as straightforward opposition, ranging from distaste to animus, to the cultural and political values of the United States. Such opposition is not necessarily based on worked-out conviction or detailed analysis; it is often the product of rage based on **resentment and envy**—reaction against American political power, American economic and technological success, and, peculiarly, American idealism.

Much of the world (including many Americans) continues to have a love-hate relationship with **American idealism**. From the inception of the republic, American democratic idealism has charmed and intrigued, yet enraged and infuriated, Europeans. At the heart of much European resentment of the United States—at the level of ideas—is indignation that the emerging American republic had the space and resources to develop more freely and fully those ennobling European ideals whose growth was stunted by the constrictions of Europe. That Americans do not possess a "tragic sense," a sense of limitations, is often resented, not because Europeans believe this "tragic sense" is desirable, but because they themselves want to be rid of it and cannot. In other words, they wish to be but cannot be like Americans; this creates resentment.

American economic and technological success has also provoked ambivalent attitudes on the part of foreigners. For instance, Soviet officialdom admires many American technological accomplishments, particularly in the areas of defense and space, but while it seeks to emulate American technological and economic success it also decries the "materialism" of American life. Malcolm Muggeridge and many others have argued that the United States is the preferred model for development, not only economically but culturally as well, for many of the Third World elites

who nevertheless continue to decry American "economic exploitation." There can be little doubt that simple envy of American material progress is an explanation for anti-Americanism of the primitive kind.

Envy of **American political power** is a predominant factor among West European elites. Anthony Crosland could write about the British in 1956:

> Anti-Americanism is an almost universal left-wing neurosis, springing from a natural resentment at the transfer of world power from London to Washington, combined with the need to find some new and powerful scapegoat to replace the capitalists at home, their utility in this role being much diminished under full employment and the welfare state.[1]

Crosland could easily have wielded a bigger brush on a wider canvas, extending this anti-Americanism to many Europeans and many conservatives. Many European conservatives have never fully recovered from the loss of Empire, and many believe that the United States, by conscious political volition, was responsible for undermining the European empires. There is, of course, some truth to this, as there is to the charge that the United States set out to sabotage the British and French attempt to increase their influence in the Middle East during the Suez fiasco of 1956.

Since the collapse of the European empires, and more generally the shrinking of Europe's role on the world stage, European elites have sought to emulate America's global role through European integration—the United States of Europe. The failure of this doomed mission has increased subconscious anti-Americanism in Europe. Some West Europeans who recognize that the survival of Western Europe is dependent upon the United States resent such dependence.

The Persistence of Resentment

This kind of anti-Americanism, deriving from a resentment of the strong and independent by the weak and dependent, is irrational but understandable. It will continue irrespective of what the United States actually does or doesn't do in the world, irrespective of which party or president is in power. Anti-American-

ism of this kind can be neither appeased nor accommodated by specific policy decisions taken in Washington or by social, economic, or cultural changes in the American republic. Resentment-based anti-Americanism will grow more shrill if U.S. leaders robustly proclaim American values, and certainly if they act with force, no matter how judiciously, on the international scene; but it will not wither on the vine during administrations that question American virtue—as when, under President Carter, the nation was said to suffer from a "malaise"—or during administrations that set ostentatious "limits" upon American power, as happened under President Nixon. Acts of self-deprecation or self-examination are but red meat to the anti-American tiger.

All great powers inevitably attract resentment of their power and success. Although the United States is not an imperial nation in the classical or contemporary European sense, it clearly is the heartland of an international system of financial and security dependencies, and this can induce the same kind of reaction as that created by the more traditionally imperial "Great Powers." Furthermore, the lack of a historic imperial outlook does not spare the United States from having its world role depicted as imperialist. Although in the immediate post–World War II period the United States made political gains for itself in the less developed world by distancing itself from the inequities of European imperialism, such a posture was not destined to succeed for very long.

The image of the United States as an "anti-imperialist" power certainly survived the first stirrings of Third World neutralism at the Bandung Conference of non-aligned nations in 1955, where very little anti-American rhetoric was in evidence. But since then, depictions of the United States as imperialist have become commonplace.[2] The Leninist addition to Marxist theory—the notion of imperialism as the last stage of capitalism—cleverly overcame the problem posed by America's obvious lack of an imperial culture and tradition. Imperialism, which in its original political sense meant colonization or *political rule* of native populations from a metropolitan heartland, was redefined and broadened to apply to *economic activity* by a great power outside its boundaries. American commerce, American finance, the

beneficent presence of American risk capital that helped develop resources otherwise lying idle, and even American loans (often rescheduled, sometimes not repaid) became, in this new intellectual and propaganda construct, weapons of "exploitation," "oppression," and "imperialism." "Coca-Cola imperialism" took on the demonic proportions of traditional colonial occupation. No amount of protest seems able to weaken the determination of some opponents of American power to hurl "imperialist" invective against the world's only non-imperialist superpower.

The 'Imperialist' Image in Europe

The image of America as an imperial power is no longer restricted to American economic activities in the less developed world. It is now cultivated by some within America's democratic allies. In West Germany the Green party (now represented in the Bundestag and therefore able to give parliamentary expression to the unilateral-nuclear-disarmament movement) conjures up the image of a West Germany "colonized" by the United States as a regular part of its propaganda. Radical West German youth use a German nationalism—embracing cultural and economic as well as political and military provincialism—as part of their campaign to get "Germany out of NATO and NATO out of Germany." David Gress of Stanford University has suggested that "nationalist neutralism" may have established a wide beachhead in West Germany:

> There is thus a symmetry of outlook on the left and right . . . that is supportive of nationalist neutralism. People holding these views are to be found in the SPD, the Free Democrats, the media, and the universities. And that is why the change in government in West Germany holds out less hope for the future cohesiveness of the Western Alliance than many in the United States . . . have wished to believe.[3]

In France, of course, "America the colonizer"—especially in the cultural realm—has been a constant refrain in both left and right circles. The imperial metaphor was given particular credence during the years of DeGaulle and in the writings of Jean Jacques Servan-Schreiber, whose anti-American *Le Défi Américain* (The American Challenge) still instructs many a mind in

nationalist France. The British left plays a similar tune: Tony Benn, leader of the left faction within the British Labour party, has referred to the United Kingdom as a "colony" of the United States; and even Denis Healey, a leading Labour moderate and erstwhile champion of Atlanticism, has pursued this insidious image by attacking Mrs. Thatcher as "an obedient servant" of the United States.

For those who wish to use it, the image of the American empire in Europe has been enhanced by the cruise and Pershing II missile issue and the "dual key" debate over whether America's European allies will have equal say with the United States in determining when and under what circumstances nuclear arms will be used to repel a Soviet attack. The American-led incursion into Grenada was used ruthlessly in Europe as part of a campaign to portray the United States as imperialist not only in the Caribbean but in Europe as well. So potentially explosive has the American military presence in Europe become that even Sir Ian Gilmour, leader of the Tory liberal faction and by no means a pro-American, felt it necessary to intervene in a House of Commons debate to warn against "igniting the fires of anti-Americanism."

The ability of such an image of American empire to gain some credibility in Europe is a measure of the intellectual and political incoherence of our time. That it can take hold, even a minority hold, in a part of the world that borders on the only modern example of a classical empire is further evidence of the distortions to which resentment of power can lead.

The 'Imperialist' Image at Home

Resentment of American power and the false depiction of it as imperial is also a home-grown phenomenon. As described by Michael Vlahos of the Johns Hopkins University, a specious domestic academic theory has developed that links America to an imperial ancestry, "making the United States the most recent incarnation of formal, classic, organic *imperium*, with its attendant behavors of manipulation, self-interest, and oppression."[4] Vlahos further argues that America, though devoid of a classical

imperium, has nevertheless often reacted against its own power in the modern world by a spurious attempt to identify itself with classical Rome:

> The identification with Cincinnatan Rome in early America was high fashion. As the United States turned outward, its chroniclers, in search of symbolic ancestry, found parallels in Roman history. Roman metaphor has dogged American statesmen since McKinley, not as plaudit but as a judgment of corruption. . . . America used the Roman analogy as symbolic self-flagellation.[5]

The reaction against power, the belief that power is corruption, and the attempt to place the United States in some linear relationship with discredited classical or contemporary imperiums are therefore not the exclusive domain of foreigners.

That the United States is qualitatively distinct from previous imperial regimes is, fortunately, still recognized. It is still possible to argue that the United States has shown remarkable restraint in its use of power, especially during its period of nuclear monopoly. Notwithstanding the "imperial" image, it is also beyond dispute that should any of its European allies ask the United States to leave, it would do so promptly, and perhaps gladly. It is even still possible to argue, amid all the intellectual confusion, that the United States is the first "great power" to exercise a global role while retaining a fully developed democratic polity and ethos.

Broadcasting the Flaws

Yet this historically novel and intriguing amalgam of global power and internal democracy does not disarm those who resent powerful states and societies. In a sense it only adds to the intensity of anti-Americanism, because the openness of American society places on display to the watching world some of its less attractive features. The surfeit of information about American life that is transmitted abroad is a mixed blessing to the American cause, and indeed to the cause of truth. Those already in the grip of an anti-American animus simply receive information selectively from the American mass information industry and use it to reinforce their own case.

American movies and television programs certainly glamorize some aspects of American life; yet they also emphasize the violence and inequalities to the point of producing a distorted image of reality. America, for average Americans, is neither as glamorous nor as rich nor as unequal nor as violent as it is portrayed by film and on the air.

Certainly the United States is a "rich nation"—although not as rich, per capita, as some European nations. And it would take a moral emptiness not to sense the injustice in glaring global disparities. Yet a natural moral outrage should not be a substitute for thought. It is not the "fault" of the United States that it is comparatively well off. And there certainly is no guarantee that the poorer parts of the planet would become better off if the United States were to lose its relative affluence.

The news and information programs on American TV also distort reality as they degenerate into what has been called the "info-tainment industry." It is far less gripping or entertaining to portray the average American going to the polls (a normal American event) than to show riots or assassinations (abnormal American events). On the issue of nuclear weapons, television cannot portray the effectiveness of deterrence; there is no "visual excitement" in scenes of families living in peace for forty years protected by the balance of nuclear power. Of far more visual interest are pictures of atomic devastation and of American rockets shooting to the sky. Haste, superficiality, and above all the need for visual impact—rather than any anti-American grand design—determine the product of the American "info-tainment industry," a product that presents a distorted picture to a world very interested in information about the American republic. All too often the United States is portrayed by Americans themselves as not only powerful and wealthy but irresponsibly and violently so.

The openness of American society also allows an internal intellectual disaffection with American society to be widely circulated abroad through the print media. The Dutch writer Jan van Houten has observed that "the fiercest denunciations of America have been homegrown":

> In the past twenty years the United States exported anti-Americanism just as it did Coca-Cola. . . . The books of Herbert Marcuse, Noam Chomsky, Norman Mailer, and other

> writers of political fiction have all been translated into various European languages. The exhortations of pundits like Jane Fonda, Angela Davis, and Susan Sontag were catnip to our media [in Western Europe].

When Herbert Marcuse argues that "American society is an explosion of insanity"; or when film star Shirley MacLaine states that "right now the social soul of America is so sick that even the overthrow of a political regime may be insufficient"; or when historian James McGregor Burns asserts that "the nation is essentially evil and the evil can be exorcised only by turning the system upside down"—these voices are heard abroad and have a more lasting effect, through their influence upon the intelligentsia, than television distortions or President Carter's proclamation of an American "malaise."

American journalists, particularly those who write for prestige publications, also carry weight abroad, particularly in Western Europe. Symptoms of internal disaffection, such as *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis's pronouncement that "the United States is the most dangerous and destructive power in the world," or *Times* columnist Tom Wicker's proclamation that "American life doesn't work anymore," are readily seized upon by those of anti-American sentiment abroad as justification for their prejudice. The anti-Americanism that such assertions feed is rarely tempered, as Lewis and Wicker would no doubt wish it to be, by the understanding that such utterances are a testimony to the laudable American commitment to free speech.

The historically new phenomenon that America presents to the world—as the first "great power" that is at the same time democratic, pluralistic, and free—does not leaven the antipathy traditionally aroused by power and success. In fact, the reverse occurs. The United States gets the worst of both worlds: its power is resented, and its internal democracy serves to project abroad a data base for foreign criticism.

How America Should Respond

Primitive anti-Americanism, the opposition to the United States derived from envy and resentment of its power and success, will exist as long as that power and success exist, and it is best

ignored. But Americans by tradition and culture are problem-solvers, and they naturally believe they can combat this anti-Americanism.

A recognition that power produces reactions is perhaps the beginning of wisdom. When American flags are burnt, American libraries ransacked, or anti-American riots displayed on American screens, these events should be seen as a natural (almost adolescent) reaction against American power and not as some fundamental affront to American existence. A superpower needs to learn to treat such events with equanimity, as endemic to its power, almost as a tribute to it. In this context the American tradition of problem-solving will serve no purpose, nor will the American national penchant for being *liked*. *Newsweek* magazine showed an intriguing naïveté in this comment:

> Watching Iranians trampling our flag and humiliating our hostages, we began to realize, almost for the first time, that there could be a nation out there that does not merely quarrel with our government—which we do all the time ourselves—but that rejects our culture and actually does not like Americans.[6]

Americans, at least on the surface, are probably the most likeable (and arguably the most generous) inhabitants of any great power in history. The sheer innocence shown by the *Newsweek* editors in the quotation above is indeed a sign of American charm and likeability. Yet Americans will not be able to diffuse anti-Americanism through amiability. They have gone about as far as they can in that direction. Further attempts to meet the approval of the non-American world will be not only futile but also humiliating.

CHAPTER THREE

The Demise of Communist Anti-Americanism

THE PRIMITIVE OR INSTINCTIVE anti-Americanism based on envy or resentment is not the only kind loose in the world. Another variety with more systematic and "intellectual" roots poses a far greater challenge to American society and values.

For a time, certainly in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, an anti-Americanism derived from Communist (Marxist and Marxist-Leninist) teaching was a serious challenge. From the Bolshevik revolution on, the Soviet regime has been the prime source of anti-American sentiment in the world. Until very recently, it tended to couch its criticism in classical Marxist and Marxist-Leninist terms.

The anti-American appeal was essentially twofold. On the level of theory, "scientific" socialism predicted the collapse of "capitalism" in the advanced capitalist states (primarily the United States, Britain, and Germany) through internal contradictions inherent in their systems. On the level of tactics, the Soviet regime attempted to win over large sections of Western opinion by evoking the Communist system as "morally superior" and as an outlet for utopian Western yearnings. George Urban has argued that the allure of Communism as an alternative to "capitalism" derives simply from utopian dreaming among "angry young men and women raging at the limitations of the human condition." Many of them, said Urban, "do not consciously support 'socialism.' They simply echo man's anguished cry since the beginning of time: 'There *has* to be a better world, or society, than this one.' "

But the anti-Americanism derived from the appeal of the Communist experience can no longer serve the Soviet regime ade-

quately, a truth well understood in the Kremlin. Communism can no longer pretend to create utopia. The intellectual climate of the 1920s and 1930s that disposed a goodly portion of the Western intelligentsia toward Communism and turned some intellectuals into agents of the Soviet Union has now evaporated. Hardly anyone, apart from an older generation of fellow travelers, has anything good to say about the Soviet system. Even most young Marxists in the West would, when probed (and nowadays even without probing), be critical of the Soviet regime. The children of the 1968 uprising in Paris, many of whom derived their anti-American instincts from a lingering belief in the superiority of the social goals of Communism, have turned on the Soviet regime with a vengeance. Bernard Henri-Lévy describes it as "reactionary"; Glucksmann calls it "fascist."

The full range of liberal and democratic socialist opinion is now under few illusions about the nature of life in the Soviet Union and the Communist states. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, the *New York Review of Books*, the *Guardian*, and even the *New Statesman*; liberals, social democrats, democratic socialists, and even some "Eurocommunists" (particularly in Italy and Spain)—all now agree, or at least have to say they agree, that the Soviet Union is no longer the paradise it was depicted to be in the thirties. Also, it is simply no longer discordant in polite company to describe the Soviet Union as a "gulag." Even the diehard Soviet apologists had to surrender to Solzhenitsyn's scathing indictment of Moscow's brutality. The debate is no longer about the nature of Soviet society: it is now about whether the Soviet Union is expansionist and how peace can best be maintained. George Orwell, Arthur Koestler, Sidney Hook—these and others have been vindicated and are now respected, at least on the Soviet question.

Therefore, any anti-Americanism derived from the attraction of the Soviet model of development as an alternative to "capitalism" is now defunct. During an interregnum, sections of the Western intelligentsia, having dumped Sovietism but still clinging to Marxism, turned to Cuba and to Allende's Chile for their inspiration: now even Marxism itself has been increasingly discredited. The analytical basis, the historicism, the prophecy, and

the postulates of both Marxism and neo-Marxism are more seriously under challenge today than at any other time (including the 1950s) since 1917.

Leszek Kolakowski, one of the most prominent historians of Marxist thought, has summed up much of the modern disillusionment with this erstwhile gripping ideology: "Marxism neither interprets the world nor changes it: it is merely a repertoire of slogans serving to organize various interests."[1] And even the interests it serves to "organize"—presumably the Communist parties of the East—are peopled by *apparatchiks* who neither understand nor care to understand Marxism. In the West some intellectuals are even reopening the question of the link between theoretical Marxism and totalitarian repression. One of the French "new philosophers" has boldly declared what in effect is a Marxist heresy, saying of the link between Stalin and Marx: "There is no worm in the fruit, no sin was added later, for the worm is the fruit and the sin is Marx."[2]

On paper it would seem that anti-Americanism had been dealt a mortal blow by the discrediting of the Soviet regime and the dramatically weakened allure of not only Marxism-Leninism but Marxism itself. The United States, for all the denunciations made of it, has not suffered the intellectual fate of the Soviet regime and its proclaimed ideology. No serious person thinks of the United States as a "gulag"; also, America's "ideology," whether described as capitalism or democracy or even social democracy, has not suffered a similar setback.

Yet, peculiarly, anti-Americanism is flourishing as never before. The discrediting of the Soviet regime and the intellectual demise of Marxism have in no way benefited the American cause. Those who placed their hope in Moscow—and its variants—have been supplanted by a new generation who place their hope in nothing at all. What used to be a positive rejection of Western society, the by-product of a utopian vision of a socialist future, has now turned into an indigenous Western negativism bordering on nihilism.

As the ideology of Communism dies, anti-Americanism becomes simply destructive, critical, and bitter, and such negativism becomes an ideology in itself. As Jan van Houten has put it, "As

leader and symbol of the West the United States is naturally their [intellectuals'] No. 1 enemy. . . . They see it quite rightly as the bulwark of everything they love to hate—capitalism, representative government, modern technology, and resolute anti-Communism."

CHAPTER FOUR

The Ideological Assault Against America

UNLIKE ANTI-AMERICAN RIOTING in the Third World or "peace demonstrations" in Western Europe, the persistent and growing ideological assault against the United States should be taken seriously. This intellectual attack is really a non-Communist repudiation of liberal democratic capitalism and its attendant values. It is based neither upon ephemeral rage nor upon specific policies; instead it represents a fundamental and enduring opposition to the course that American society has taken over two centuries. Perhaps "ideology" is too strong a term; "impulse" might be more accurate. This Western anti-Americanism is slippery and subtle, rarely overtly expressed, certainly less coherent than other traditional isms. Even so it remains the dominant intellectual framework of much of the Western and Westernized intelligentsia.

The intellectual roots of this ideology of anti-Americanism are sunk deep in European history. In the contemporary world they lie in a group of distorted and bastardized Western political traditions that have always, incipiently at least, challenged the American experience. The group includes some surprising bedfellows: European socialism (in all its varieties, including its most recent—American liberalism, which in reality is not "liberal" in the classical sense), aspects of European conservatism (mostly of the traditional kind), and, of course, European fascism. This challenge to the American experience amounts in fact to a challenge to the historic liberalism that is central to Western values and institutions.

Because in our day political vocabulary has lost its integrity, "historic liberalism" requires explanation. The classical liberal

tradition developed most prominently in nineteenth-century England and was represented politically by the Liberal party. It was in most essentials a continuation in modern garb (in the industrialized, commercialized society) of the Whig tradition, of "The Good Old Cause." At its heart was an optimistic belief in progress, in the supremacy and autonomy of the individual, in the benificence of commerce and capitalism both economically and morally, and in limited and constitutional government. Liberal England in the nineteenth century, before it became sidetracked (before what George Dangerfield called "The Strange Death of Liberal England"), was building modern liberal capitalist democracy. The American experience, though, was more profoundly and purely liberal, and it had even greater consequences for the world. Liberal capitalism developed far more fully because of America's lack of a feudal tradition, the absence of what R. H. Tawney called "the lingering aroma of the aristocratic legend."

America is therefore the true end product of the liberal grand design. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, in an attempt to help Americans understand their political and cultural identity, to understand "who we are" and "who they are," has made much the same point:

> We are the inheritors and the embodiment, the twentieth-century American version, of a long struggle against arbitrary power. This struggle has characterized our tradition, the Western tradition, since long before that reluctant King John was persuaded to sign the Magna Carta in the early thirteenth century. We are the heirs and bearers of a tradition that was shaped by the persistent efforts of Englishmen to limit the power and jurisdiction of their kings.[1]

Paul Johnson echoes the argument when he states that America is indeed "the posthumous child of the English revolution." Authentic liberals should therefore welcome and celebrate America. That so many American "liberals" do not implies that they are not liberals at all but are rather a branch of America's most formidable foe—the European reaction against liberalism.

This reaction, the fundamental source of anti-Americanism and of so much instinctive hostility to the very existence of the United States, has taken two broad forms. Both forms are anti-

democratic; both represent a revolt against the masses, whose arrival on the elitist and aristocratic scene has been blamed upon the liberal tradition.

The Criticism of Democratic Culture

First, there is the long-standing European criticism of American democratic culture. Professor Andrei Markovits of Boston University pointed out that German intellectuals, those who were not liberals, have traditionally been in the vanguard of the European critique of American mass culture. Hegel, Heine, Burckhardt, members of the Frankfurt School and their heirs, have all displayed a distaste for American civilization. Markovits argues that whereas America and Americans have normally been popular with the German public, this attitude was not shared by the German literati:

> It is interesting to observe a definite convergence between conservative and radical thinkers in terms of their mutually shared anti-Americanism. Both would place German—the radicals would stress European—"Kultur" above American "civilization." This new entity has consistently been decried as overly materialistic, vulgar, uncouth, instrumental, mass-oriented.[2]

It is difficult to assess the extent to which these very fundamental anti-American prejudices persist among German intellectuals, and the extent to which they permeate down to the broader political class and to the general public. In the period since the Second World War, of course, West Germans have forged a substantial cultural and geostrategic consensus that is apparently pro-American. In many respects West Germany has become the most "Americanized" of America's West European allies. Yet these traditional German criticisms of the United States persist and can be heard today among the German "Greens" in the "peace movement." If the contemporary search for a separate German identity continues, then these deep-seated and traditional "cultural" criticisms could enter mainstream thinking.

Underlying much anti-American sentiment, therefore, is a profoundly elitist view of society. This elitism, in the age of democ-

racy, is often hidden, of course. It can be glimpsed in the strain of European thought that has always seen equality and culture as antagonistic. The cultural enthusiast Clive Bell argued that "civilization requires the existence of a leisured class. . . . On inequality all civilizations have stood."[3] Bell echoes the arguments of Bertrand de Jouvenel and of José Ortega y Gasset, who coined the term "the revolt of the masses" to describe and condemn modern democratic society. The revolt of the masses meant the triumph of ordinariness, according to Ortega: "The characteristic of the hour is that of the commonplace mind," and this triumph of the vulgar "imposes the rights of vulgarity, or vulgarity as a right."[4] Equality, democracy, the mass modern society, not only lack culture but *threaten* culture. The United States, then, the most complete modern expression of commercial, democratic society, stands condemned.

These seemingly archaic impulses have not disappeared from the European scene and should not be thought of as irrelevant. They can always make a comeback, particularly in an environment in which, for geostrategic reasons, Europe may attempt to redefine itself in the world and redefine itself against the United States.

The European "peace movements" have cleverly tried to use the cultural animosity toward the United States held by many a West European elite as a means of coalition-building, of attracting to their anti-American cause (which is essentially political, and leftist in derivation) other European elites who are politically conservative but socially and culturally anti-democratic. E. P. Thompson, Europe's leading unilateralist guru, reckons he may have discovered the impulse and the potential coalition that will split NATO apart. After "Eurocommunism" we now have "Euro-nationalism." Thompson has suggested that "if there is a common notion that is beginning to conduct the ensemble, it is that of a peaceful European opinion acting as a third negotiator between the superpowers, with the ultimate objective of reunifying European societies and *culture*" (my italics).[5]

Much unilateralist propaganda is therefore aimed at the "cultural" level. It is liberally laced with nostalgic appeals to pastoralism (by support of the Sicilian cooperative farmers and the

Larzac shepherds in local opposition to the placement of cruise missiles) and to older, rural, gentler values. All this is skillfully counterpoised to what is conjured up as a rapacious, commercial, trans-Atlantic superpower out to destroy the peaceful "Olde England" and "Old Europe." Hence "culture" becomes a political weapon.

The Rejection of Social Equality

Anti-Americanism can also be glimpsed in a traditionalist rejection of social equality. The United States is arguably the most socially egalitarian in the modern world. As Margaret Mead wrote in her study of the American character: "The American system is really a classification based upon a ladder, up which people are expected to move, rather than on an orderly stratification or classification of society, within the pigeon-holes of which people are born."

The British social democrat Anthony Crosland argued in a classic work written in the middle 1950s that in American as compared to European society, "class distinctions are less pervasive and less hereditary, social attitudes are less class conscious, the atmosphere more natural and unrestrained, the social ladder as a whole much shorter, and social envy and resentment less—in sum, social equality is much greater."[6] Crosland represented a strain of social democratic thinking that praised American social equality as a positive virtue. In so doing he, and others, exposed the elitist nature of anti-Americanism held at least implicitly by both conservatives and socialists outside the United States. Conservative elitism derived from an attachment to social hierarchy and to a political order that would entrench that hierarchy; socialist elitism derived from the view that the state, or the party, knows best.

This tradition of European social democracy (now defunct) believed in the need for social modernization, in "classlessness" of the American variety, indeed (though they would not often say it) in "Americanization." For a time, particularly in the late fifties and early sixties, as post-war affluence began such a process of social modernization throughout Europe, it seemed as

though some convergence between the United States and Western Europe might indeed occur. It was conceivable during those times that a new trans-Atlantic confederation—political, social, cultural, and economic—was actually in the making. Subsequent economic problems, made worse throughout Western Europe by the rise in oil prices in the mid-seventies, tended, on one level, to polarize the politics and societies of Western Europe, dispersing the pro-American, pro-Atlantic-community center. At another level they gave a further impetus to West European integration, with its wistful notions of a separate West European identity—a development not necessarily anti-American but always incipiently so.

The important point here, though, is to restress the important link between a belief in "classlessness" and social modernization, and pro-Atlantic, pro-American sympathies—a combination that is as absent on the modern European right as on the modern European left.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Attack on Middle American Values

AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS HAVE FOUND much to criticize and ridicule in the behavior and values of Middle America. Their attack on "bourgeois" life and character is not derived from Marxist analysis but stands on its own. It is powerful and persistent.

Daniel Bell has attempted to trace this hostility to bourgeois values to an American reaction against puritanism. He argues that bourgeois American society derived in part from a puritan, Whig-capitalist tradition in which "the emphasis was not just on economic activity but on the formation of *character* (sobriety, probity, work as a calling)."[1] Intellectuals delight in ridiculing such traits, sometimes for no better reason than that they are found in abundance in Middle America. This ridicule reached its apogee during the countercultural rebellion in the late 1960s, led by campus radicals who had not experienced the character-forming events that shaped the values of their elders, such as the depression, wars, and the daily struggles of immigrant families to make their way in the new country.

Yet underneath this largely unimportant youthful rebellion some more enduring criticisms of American bourgeois life were developing. First, the quintessentially American work ethic was undergoing serious scrutiny. This puritan imperative was originally valued not only for itself but also as an engine for economic growth. However, with the arrival of prosperity and technology the work ethic lost its sacred aura, and Americans felt free to attack it. Charles Reich argued in *The Greening of America* (1970):

> Work and living have become more and more pointless and empty. . . . For most Americans work is mindless, exhausting, boring, servile, and hateful. . . . Our life activities have become plastic, vicarious, and false to our genuine needs, activities fabricated by others and forced upon us.[2]

"Others" here refers to American corporations, and the attack upon the work ethic was in part a simple leftist contrivance to undermine the legitimacy of democratic capitalism. But it was also an echo of earlier European skepticism about modernity, commercialism, and the destructive consequences for a leisured class of liberal economic development. It used to be said that when ideas died in Europe they came to the United States to be reborn. The attack upon the American puritan work ethic—an attack that I believe has essentially been repulsed—is a case in point.

Bourgeois Values and Social Tyranny

If the work ethic was seen as increasingly redundant and inhumane, other American bourgeois values were seen, usually by the same intellectual caste, as potentially oppressive. Central to the Protestant ethic and the puritan temper—and observable (according to Daniel Bell) in such exemplars of the American spirit as Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin—were the values of sobriety, sexual restraint, frugality, honorable public conduct, and a generally rather strict and ascetic attitude toward life.

Such values were sometimes seen as incipient instruments of social tyranny, particularly by those who did not share them. But these bedrock guides to conduct infused rural, small-town America and, together with the deeply entrenched work ethic, helped to build the United States into a dynamic economy and a world power.

The persistent attempt not simply to *exhort* or to *exemplify* but to *impose* these values upon the total community by law, also a feature of American life, reached an extreme form in the twentieth century during Prohibition. Not surprisingly, such attempts aroused some hostility. And as American society changed from rural to metropolitan and suburban, as the American environment became less harsh, these founding values seemed

increasingly irrelevant to many. Yet even amid the sweeping self-indulgence of the late twentieth century, the traditional bourgeois values have been surprisingly resilient and to some extent at least have continued to define and describe America and Americans. Consequently those who continue to reject them, or at least to fear their imposition, have tended either to set themselves against American society or to see themselves as set against it. This alienation offers fertile ground for anti-Americanism.

The American experience is primarily one of dissent, freedom, and tolerance. A great irony is that the American liberal virtues of tolerance and freedom, enshrined in the Constitution and in the country's institutions, often collide with the traditional liberal values. The great "bourgeois" *political* tradition—political freedom, personal liberty, limits upon governmental and social coercion—is often, properly, used to reject attempts to impose "bourgeois" *social* conventions and customs. Consequently, the opposition to bourgeois values and the bourgeois life, which most certainly lies at the heart of much anti-Americanism, can be couched in the rhetoric of American tolerance and freedom. In a survey of decadent societies, historian Robert Adams argued:

> As mutual tolerance and consideration are the very flower of democratic civilization, it may appear absurd and even hateful to suggest that they carry within them the spores of national debility. Still, I want to propose that the gathering fog-bank of American middle-class niceness has in many areas a muffling and softening effect that prevents us not only from dealing with real problems, but from recognizing their existence.[3]

Modern tolerance is based upon the proposition that nothing is ultimately intolerable. This absolute tolerance not only poses problems for foreign policy (as it is the root idea behind pacifism) but also induces, among its true believers, a deep estrangement from an American society that continually evokes absolute values and beliefs.

Skepticism About America's Future

The outright rejection of bourgeois values, then, can lead to quite rabid anti-American sentiment. Also present in our day is a deep skepticism about the viability of the bourgeois scheme of

things. The belief that America is breaking down through internal contradictions is based on two types of analysis. First, there is Joseph Schumpeter's famous dictum that bourgeois societies cannot defend themselves. He argued in stark terms, as early as 1942, that commercial republics have invariably failed in the great game of international politics:

> In practically every emergency [they] . . . had to hand over the reins to a warlord of feudal complexion. . . . The inference was obvious. . . . The bourgeois class is ill equipped to face the problems, both domestic and international, that are normally to be faced by a country of any importance.[4]

In the second type of analysis, Daniel Bell examined the contradictions in American bourgeois capitalist life in a study of what he describes as "the new capitalism" of modern American corporations.[5] Bell argues that this new capitalism, though its language and rhetoric derive from the puritanical past, is essentially destructive of traditional puritan and bourgeois values. Modern corporate America creates new needs on the installment plan, he says, and "the one thing that would utterly destroy the new capitalism is the serious practice of [bourgeois] delayed gratification." His analysis of the new capitalism should be taken seriously. It would be tragic if the original liberal bourgeois culture that discovered and sustained early capitalism should be weakened by its twentieth-century progeny.

There is certainly nothing inherently anti-American in being critical of some harmful moral consequences (particularly in the realm of individual responsibility) of large business and financial activity. The "business of America" is more than "business." Yet a skepticism about the viability of the American commercial republic, though not value-laden in itself, can easily turn into defeatism about America's future. This defeatist outlook became quite the vogue following the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, even reaching the level of quasi-official proclamations. Joseph Schumpeter himself, the grandfather of modern American pessimism, declared:

> Defeatist is he who, while giving lip service to Christianity and all other values of our civilization, yet refuses to rise to their defense—no matter whether he accepts their defeat as

> a foregone conclusion or deludes himself with futile hopes against hope. For this is one of those situations in which optimism is nothing but a form of defection.[6]

Yet pessimism, particularly when it is proclaimed robustly and with fanfare, and when it suggests no remedies, is hardly any more desirable.

CHAPTER SIX

The Charge of a 'Fascist' America

IF THE UNITED STATES stands for the bourgeois values of Middle America, it also, and preeminently, stands for democracy, and the traditional European distaste for America's democratic culture extends to its political democracy also. In fact, beneath all the caveats and obfuscations, European skepticism about the total democratic experiment in the new world is the real seedbed of anti-Americanism.

From Tocqueville on, Europeans have both admired the powerful new force that American democracy represented and been wary of its consequences. The French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville, who was more balanced about the American experiment than many of his contemporaries, summed up his sentiments clearly (see also appendix A):

> The principle of the sovereignty of the people is not either barren or concealed, as it is with some other nations; it is recognized by the customs and proclaimed by the laws; it spreads freely, and arrives without impediment at its most remote consequences. If there be a country in the world where the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people can be fairly appreciated . . . and where its dangers and its advantages may be foreseen, that country is assuredly America.[1]

Elites of any kind fear the democratic imperative because by its very nature it threatens them. And it is a fact of modern life that the United States is the most profoundly non-elitist society on earth. This is not to say that elites do not exist in American society. The point is that the social development of the United States has produced *competing* elites, elites that are constantly subject to criticism, review, and removal. The United States is genuinely pluralistic in a world increasingly hostile to pluralism.

Even the most rudimentary survey of the world's political and social systems will reveal the ingrained elitist nature of most of the world outside the United States. All the Communist systems are based upon the elite of a single party, and nearly all Third World states, whatever their level of economic development, are run by political, economic, or social elites. Even in the European countries social modernization has rarely reached the point where society is as open and mobile as it is in North America.

Although there is ample evidence that popular attitudes toward the United States are much less hostile than elite attitudes, it is difficult to see how these public attitudes will be able to make themselves felt among the elite opinion leaders in more closed societies. In West European nations, the least closed of all the societies outside North America, there is no native populism or anti-establishmentism of the American kind at work: politicians in search of office do not "run against" London or Bonn or Paris or Rome. And those at the top of the highly centralized and influential European institutions (parties, government structures, trade unions, media, the academy) will continue to inform public opinion rather than be informed by it.

The Fear of Populism

Apart from fearing the consequences to themselves of American democratic culture and social modernization, foreign elites have often pointed to the dangers they see in the American democratic experiment, to possible consequences of popular sovereignty. One is the ever present threat of democratic tyranny. Although America's founding fathers, with the possible exception of Thomas Jefferson, eschewed populism and populistic institutions (and Jefferson appealed only to the *moderate* populist instincts), America's potential for populism has always terrified intellectuals. And its rural populism—often embracing extreme political positions, anti-intellectual in temper, hostile to minorities—has indeed posed a threat to liberal values. The extreme populist sentiment that infused the politics of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy reinforced these fears; in the culture of anti-

Americanism, "McCarthyite" has been one of the most powerful epithets of abuse, one guaranteed to strike home in political discourse almost anywhere.

The fact that American institutions (with their subtle and effective mechanisms of checks and balances) and American instinctive decencies have usually been able to contain extreme populist threats to basic liberal values is often ignored. Also ignored, in the near-paranoid fear of besieged intellectuals about populist tendencies, is the fundamental liberality of most Americans. America does not simply have a liberal polity; it is a liberal society. Yet consider this tract from an American government textbook used widely on American campuses:

> Despite a superficial commitment to the symbols of democracy, the American people have a surprisingly weak commitment to individual liberty, toleration of diversity, and freedom of expression for those who would challenge the existing order. Social science research reveals that most persons are not deeply attached to the causes of liberty, fraternity, or equality. On the contrary, support for free speech and press, for freedom of dissent, and for equality of opportunity for all is associated with high educational levels, prestigious occupations, and high social status.[2]

In fact "social science research" reveals no such conclusions, unless one wishes to interpret the average American's concern for traditional values, law, and national security (a concern more pronounced than that held by elites) as an incipient authoritarianism. The more one ponders such statements, the more viscerally and determinedly anti-American they appear, and at the most fundamental level—that of not liking or trusting the American people.

On the 'Fascist' Road

This fear of populism has often degenerated into a peculiar notion that America is potentially fascist. Arnold Beichman, in his book *Nine Lies About America*, quotes influential Americans who have argued that the United States is either a fascist state or on the road to becoming one.[3] Writing in the early 1970s, Beich-

man assembled an array of outlandish statements by Americans. Professor Herbert Marcuse stated that "as far as I am concerned, one can speak with complete justification of an incipient fascism" in America; Professor Philip Slater of Brandeis University wrote that "liberals will be given the choice, during the next decade or so, between participating in some way in the new culture and living under a Fascist regime"; Bertram Gross, distinguished urban affairs professor at Hunter College, warned that "techno-urban fascism" might develop in the United States, that America could witness the emergence of a "new form of garrison state, or totalitarianism, built by older elites to resolve the growing conflicts of post-industrialism."

Even allowing for the mood of the times (the early 1970s), for the fact that the accusers may not have fully meant what they were saying, and for the intellectual sloppiness that often accompanies emotional reactions against one's own country, such statements must be seen as deeply irrational. Nonetheless, they ineluctably entwine themselves into the political discourse about the United States. As Beichman pointed out, "the idea of fascism is so abhorrent to us that to call a person or a political system 'fascist' is immediately to endow the accusation with a semblance of authenticity." An observation made by Walter Lippmann more than half a century ago still stands: "There is in America today a distinct prejudice in favor of those who make the accusations."

Even today, strains of this early 1970s countercultural "analysis" of American society are present in the political discourse. The respected political analyst Kevin Phillips has, from a different point on the political spectrum, also raised the question of the potential in the United States for "authoritarianism." In *Post-Conservative America* he says that in the 1980s "post-industrial or communications-age 'populism' could support American authoritarianism, anti-government rhetoric notwithstanding."[4] He argues that the unrepentant liberalism of the 1980s has become discredited, that conservatism has become radicalized, and that "to future historians, the early 1980s are almost certain to mark a transition to a new politics, a new economics, and a new philosophy of governance." Phillips predicts that lower-middle-class "populism" will become an increasing feature of the Amer-

ican scene and that, as "old right establishmentarianism" and what he describes as "paleo-liberalism" wither on the vine, something unpleasant will take their place both in the United States and in other Western countries.

The predictions of the mid-1980s are likely to turn out to be as inaccurate as those of the early 1970s. Such apocalyptic prophecies tend to discount not only the robust American liberal impulse but also the seemingly stolid reality of American economic, political, and social pluralism. Whatever the imaginings or predilections of intellectuals or ideologues, this pluralism will serve to preclude the predicted "authoritarianism." If the world's future does lie in the direction of increased authority and less liberty, the United States is the one country that is likely to retain some measure of traditional freedom. The memory of liberty and the reality of pluralism are simply too strong on the North American continent to be eradicated.

Soviet Propaganda Gains

Nonetheless, such charges against the United States, even at the level of prophecy rather than fact, are damaging. They tend to excite intellectuals and worry publics. Charges of "violence," "oppression," "imperialism," and "fascism" all tend to merge in the public mind into a generally unsavory picture of the country. Repeated often and loudly, they take on an emotional and psychological life of their own that is difficult to combat by factual argument.

In the international propaganda battle, the Soviet Union skillfully exploits *Western* fears about the development of Western society and uses the *Western* language of liberal or progressive dissent to denigrate Western societies, particularly the United States. For example, the International Organization of Journalists, a Soviet propaganda organ founded in Czechoslovakia some thirty years ago, seeks to portray a West in which basic freedoms, particularly press freedoms, are being increasingly diminished. Its propaganda stance is a model of how to turn the political language of the West against itself. As Professor John Merrill describes it, "it tends to hide its propaganda behind a smooth

patina of *humane* concerns, *progressive* ideals, a deep dedication to press *freedom*, a *balanced* newsflow, and opposition to fascist regimes and the like. But its cold, blunt, and repetitive Marxist line is easily penetrable." In the propaganda war, if certain words—"humane," "progressive," "freedom," "liberation"—are constantly counterpoised to "imperialist" and "fascist," an image is built that is difficult to dislodge.

It is crucial to understand, however, that the Soviet Union can use these terms successfully only while there exists within Western society, and among the Westernized intelligentsia elsewhere throughout the non-Communist world, a readiness to embrace the anti-American instinct and impulse. Anti-Americanism remains an inherent characteristic of the American and Western world. It is, in all essentials, the product of a debate about the nature and development of Western man. The geopolitical adversaries of the United States succeed in their propaganda efforts only when there is widespread internal disaffection, as in the 1960s; they fail when, as in the 1950s, this disaffection is not present.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Elitism Against America

ANTI-AMERICANISM OF ALMOST all varieties, including American anti-Americanism, is an elitist phenomenon. Western elites, especially the intellectual "new class," tend to determine the idea and slogan agenda for a broader-based animus against America. These idea-mongers dominate the prestige media and are a strong voice in the classrooms of America's most influential colleges and universities.

The American concept of majority rule has engendered criticism, but so has the other strain of America's experiment with democracy—the libertarian tradition, with its excessive emphasis upon freedoms, rights, and the autonomy of the individual. The American system cannot win, it seems: it is denigrated both for a populist impulse that threatens individual liberty and for an "excessive" individualism.

In the powerfully argued book *The End of the American Era*, published in 1970, Andrew Hacker summed up the arguments of what became a genre of literary criticism of contemporary American society. (An excerpt appears in appendix B.) "Among the more widespread postwar preoccupations has been the growing impersonality of American life," observed Hacker. "Most agree that rootlessness, alienation, and a crisis of identity characterize the time."[1] He went on to say that "two hundred million egos had been let loose, and . . . the consequences could be dire"; that "virtually every American possesses a self-esteem hitherto reserved for a privileged or talented few"; and that Americans "are *infected* with the idea that they are equal to any or all with whom they may choose to compare themselves." Hacker is certainly right in saying that a pervasive egalitarianism (certainly in the social, political, and cultural realm) suffuses American life. But his thesis that this egalitarianism, this elevation of the individual, causes

a feeling of rootlessness and "alienation" among a broader section of society than the intelligentsia is open to grave doubt.

Domestic charges of an excessive individualism in American life have been reinforced by some powerful voices from abroad. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, in a trenchant critique of the West (and especially of the United States) delivered at Harvard University in 1978, argued that a grave change had occurred:

> In early democracies, as in American democracy at the time of its birth, all individual human rights were granted on the ground that man is God's creature. . . . Two hundred or even fifty years ago, it would have seemed quite impossible, in America, that an individual be granted boundless freedom with no purpose, simply for the satisfaction of his whims. Subsequently . . . all such limitations were eroded everywhere in the West.[2]

Individualism had, in his view, collapsed into mere egotism. (For more of Solzhenitsyn's views see appendix C.)

Contemporary conservatives, those of the traditionalist kind, also tend to warm to this theme. According to them, the "autonomous individual" is the enemy, and the United States is the society in which the "autonomous individual" has achieved freest reign. John Casey, the Cambridge moral philosopher, states the traditionalist argument that customs, traditions, institutions, and the state can "help build a bridge between man as a purely autonomous being, pellucid as regards his own thoughts, intentions, and desires, and man as immersed in nature." At some point, according to this view, Western society took a wrong course, a course half traversed in Europe and fully traversed in the United States; Solzhenitsyn argues that "the autonomy of man from any higher force above him" was a misbegotten product of the Renaissance from which Western man has never recovered. Some Western journalists have also taken up the idea of America as overly individualistic, dominated by unrestrained materialism, and bent upon self-gratification; Henry Fairlie's book *The Spoiled Child of the Western World* deals with many of these charges.

The excesses of American democracy in the modern age—those of rampant individualism, the threat to culture posed by

the "mass society," the threat to minorities posed by populism—should not be lightly dismissed. But what solution is proposed? Critics of modern mass democracy, drawing upon the challenges embodied in the works of Burckhardt, Kierkegaard, Spengler, Ortega y Gasset, Solzhenitsyn, and others, seem able only to rail against man and society as they are without suggesting a better way. The approach, essentially negative, comes down in the end to the postulate that "the people"—either individually or collectively—cannot be trusted. But then who is to make decisions for them, for us?

Here the answer becomes incipiently elitist or worse. Should we, because of these democratic excesses, settle for a guardian culture run by a totalitarian party, an authoritarian regime, or a class system based upon some arbitrary measure of merit or on inherited social position? Until the critics of democracy can come up with some practical alternatives that do not relapse into tyranny or worse, mere mortals have no choice but to plow on along the unperfect democratic path, trusting themselves and their fellow human beings to construct a reasonable way of ordering society.

This is why modern anti-Americanism, based as much of it is upon a rejection of essential democratic imperatives, will ultimately fail. And it is why the United States, with its many problems, retains a unique place in the aspirations of the people of the world. Such a powerful and profoundly attractive notion as democracy cannot be stopped dead in its tracks by alienated intellectual elites.

CHAPTER EIGHT

American 'Purity' Against America

IF ONE SOURCE OF anti-Americanism is European skepticism about democracy (and an American liberal echo of this skepticism), then another, paradoxically, is the American reaction against European traditionalism.

During the emergence of the United States into nationhood, a powerful American myth developed. This myth attempted to set the New World apart from the corruptions of the Old. The idea of American uniqueness became entwined with the idea of American purity and virtue. This virtue was to be its own reward and was to succeed, according to the myth, by example rather than by force or even persuasion. American isolationism was liberally laced with warnings that American virtue would be compromised by "foreign entanglements." The rest of the world, in this view, either was not worth the candle or, if it was, would be persuaded of the rightness of the American way simply by seeing American democracy at work.

The belief in power through example led to an American suspicion of power itself. This translated itself into a visceral opposition to America's attempts to defend itself through force of arms or diplomatic intrigue or certainly covert action. The opposition later extended to American corporations as they attempted to uphold their interests abroad. In this way there developed a peculiarly nativist American moralism that in the name of virtuous America set itself against America's large institutions, both governmental and commercial. These institutions were thought to be usurping America's traditional values. From this perspective, bigness itself was bad.

This moralistic approach was best exemplified in recent decades by such American Westerners as the former U.S. senators Frank Church, Wayne Morse, and George McGovern. These men of

affairs were in no sense alienated intellectuals, drawing their inspiration from alienated European intellectuals. They represented an indigenous, somewhat unworldly American view that in the name of American values saw American centers of power as essentially evil. They also represented a twentieth-century version of what George Kennan (see also appendix D) described as a nineteenth-century American view of the world:

> Americans seemed to lose their feeling for reality generally about foreign policy. . . . The romantic spirit seized them. . . . We were concerned to appear as something . . . lofty, something noble, something of universal significance.[1]

The British historian Correlli Barnett recognized many of the same attributes in late nineteenth-century British statecraft, an evangelical tradition that could see life only in terms of a struggle between "all that was noble and good" and the evil inherent in aggregations of power and wealth.

Morality superseded strategy in this world outlook. This was the real problem with the presidency of Jimmy Carter: he seemed unable to come to grips with the realities of the nuclear age, the use of power, and the fact that America was challenged in the world by another power that was utterly different from it in both character and objectives.[2] The inability of American moralists to reconcile themselves to these ugly realities tended to make them even more angry at the use of power. Take, for instance, the following piece of unctuousness, high in moral content but devoid of strategic concern (and sense), from an editorial in the *New York Times* condemning the American-led incursion into Grenada: "Delusion, deception, secrecy, and lawlessness are not the American game—not just because Americans preach a superior moral code but because they actually live by it."[3] This editorial made its *total* case against the American action in moral terms. At no point was the high-blown rhetoric sullied by any strategic considerations.

The combination of a moral skepticism about power and an obliteration of the strategic sense turns its holders instinctively against *any* use of the country's power outside its own borders. When American power is exercised abroad, American society itself becomes, from this perspective, corrupted. Hence Gary

Hart, another American Westerner, could say while serving as George McGovern's campaign manager in the presidential campaign of 1972: "McGovern is saying some . . . highly moral things. That moral challenge . . . will be welcomed by a society teetering somewhere near the brink of moral bankruptcy and collapse." And at the height of the American crisis over the use of power in Vietnam, the introduction to the 1972 Democratic party platform could state: "We are not sure if the values we have lived by for generations have any meaning left."

Hence some Americans became anti-American in the sense that they lost their faith in the virtue of their nation. Such provincialism lay behind much of the anger at the United States that erupted in the 1960s and early 1970s. Hence, too, a coalition was formed between what Jeane Kirkpatrick has described as "an influential but narrow band of the East Coast cultural elite" (an elite that, like many a European, distrusted the American people) and other Americans who believed that the country's purity had been corrupted by aggregations of power and the use of that power abroad. It was a powerful and heady mix of ideas and persons, and in the 1970s it turned on what came to be called "the power structure," particularly the American executive, with a righteous vengeance.

CHAPTER NINE

The Future of Anti-Americanism

THE FUTURE OF anti-Americanism is easy to predict for the near and medium term: it will intensify. The United States is now recovering from the "Vietnam syndrome." As the collective memory of the Southeast Asian tragedy recedes, Americans in increasing numbers will cease wringing their hands and apologizing for themselves. The United States, with its economic and military power still intact, will attempt to reassert its position in the world. The deployment of American cruise and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe and the American-led rescue mission in Grenada may represent the return of American confidence and resolve. They may represent even more: a change in what the Soviet Union calls the "correlation of forces" in the world, a correlation that has an important psychological component.

Yet any reassertion of U.S. power and resolve, any serious sign of a renewed confidence of the American people in their country's values and institutions, is certain to meet with fierce resistance at home and abroad. The gains made at the expense of the United States in the last decade and a half will not be easily relinquished. The United States will continue to be isolated at the United Nations; anti-American protests and rioting will increase; tensions within America's alliance systems will continue; and a powerful intellectual and emotional critique of the direction of American foreign and defense policy can be expected at home.

The future of anti-Americanism in the long run, however, will depend essentially on the attitude of the American people and their leaders toward themselves. Anti-Americanism is essentially indigenous, not in the sense that its exponents primarily live and work in the United States but rather in the sense that anti-Americanism can flourish only if Americans themselves either choose to believe what others say about them or, alternatively,

come to be dependent upon the approval of others. The strength of anti-Americanism will therefore be directly related to the resilience of the belief of Americans in themselves. It will depend upon whether Americans become persuaded that their society is fundamentally misdirected (their democracy incipiently "fascist," their culture utterly egotistical). It will also be decided by whether Americans continue to measure themselves against some utopian sense of moral purity or whether they adopt more realistic standards, comparing themselves to other past and present societies—a comparison that can only increase their sense of worth and confidence. It will depend on whether what happened in the 1960s and 1970s—a period when, in Ben Wattenberg's words, "the dominant rhetoric . . . [was] one of failure, guilt, and crisis"—turns out to have been an aberration in the American experience or the beginning of a period of profound change, the first manifestation of an introspective epoch of self-doubt.

If it is an aberration, then American democracy will once again come into balance with American power, and the United States will once again be able to marshall a domestic consensus behind responsible and assertive foreign policy. The return of American power and resolve will diminish anti-Americanism abroad. Nothing succeeds like success. In the post-war years, it was in the 1950s, when American power and resolve were at their height, that anti-Americanism was at its lowest ebb; and it is in the 1980s, in the wake of the defeat in Vietnam, the Watergate scandal, and the events in Iran, that anti-Americanism is at high tide.

Let the evidence of anti-Americanism in West Germany serve as a paradigm of the phenomenon. Andrei Markovits has argued that "liking Americans and trusting them are two different propositions. There is quite a bit of evidence that the Germans thought the Americans to be stronger and more determined to defend them in the early 1950s but at the same time showed less affection for them than now when this confidence vis-à-vis the United States has waned."[1] Uwe Siemon-Netto supports this view that West German affection for the United States remains high. In a 1981 article he cited an Allensbach Institute poll disclosing that 56 per cent of all West Germans "liked" Americans, higher than

all previous results since 1967. He asserted that Americans are wrong in thinking "that they are disliked by their most important allies in Western Europe."[2] Yet in this same environment anti-American sentiment is supposed to be at its height, as evidenced not only in anti-nuclear protest marches but also by the growth of neutralist impulses and strategems. It is a lack of trust and confidence in America as a superpower, not a lack of affection, that is at the heart of the matter.

Concluding Observations

- Anti-Americanism should not be confused with opposition to an American administration's specific policy goals or even general strategy.
- Anti-Americanism is a natural response to American power and success.
- There are two fundamental roots of anti-Americanism, other than envy at the material success of the United States: (1) the belief that American democracy destroys culture; (2) the belief that American democracy is based upon excessive individualism in which "rights" have been elevated over "responsibilities." Both of these criticisms are, in essence, criticisms of democracy itself; they should be seen, and exposed, as such.
- Americans should no longer care about being liked. They should seek to be trusted and respected instead.

Empires do not rise and fall, and nations do not measure their interests, on the basis of affection between peoples. If trust in America's commitment and resolve and respect for its institutions and values are restored, America and the American promise may still re-emerge as the "last, best hope" for mankind.

APPENDIX A

Democracy in America

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE

A young French politician and writer sent to the United States in the 1830s to study its penal system observed much more than that. The result was "Democracy in America," one of the great classics of political philosophy. In the following excerpts, Tocqueville marvels at the degree to which popular sovereignty prevails in America and then perceptively foretells the particular problems that the young democracy will have in conducting foreign policy.

WHENEVER THE POLITICAL LAWS of the United States are to be discussed, it is with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people that we must begin. The principle of the sovereignty of the people, which is to be found, more or less, at the bottom of almost all human institutions, generally remains concealed from view. It is obeyed without being recognized, or if for a moment it be brought to light, it is hastily cast back into the gloom of the sanctuary. "The will of the nation" is one of those expressions which have been most profusely abused by the wily and the despotic of every age. To the eyes of some it has been represented by the venal suffrages of a few of the satellites of power; to others by the votes of a timid or an interested minority; and some have even discovered it in the silence of a people, on the supposition that the fact of submission established the right of command.

In America the principle of the sovereignty of the people is not either barren or concealed, as it is with some other nations; it is recognized by the customs and proclaimed by the laws; it spreads freely, and arrives without impediment at its most remote consequences. If there be a country in the world where the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people can be fairly appreciated, where it can be studied in its application to the affairs of society, and where its dangers and its advantages may be foreseen, that country is assuredly America.

I have already observed that, from their origin, the sovereignty of the people was the fundamental principle of the greater number of British colonies in America. It was far, however, from then exercising as much influence on the government of society as it now does. Two obstacles, the one external, the other internal, checked its invasive progress. It could not ostensibly disclose itself in the laws of colonies which were still constrained to obey the mother-country: it was therefore obliged to spread secretly, and to gain ground in the provincial assemblies, and especially in the townships.

American society was not yet prepared to adopt it with all its consequences. The intelligence of New England, and the wealth of the country to the south of the Hudson (as I have shown in the preceding chapter), long exercised a sort of aristocratic influence, which tended to retain the exercise of social authority in the hands of a few. The public functionaries were not universally elected, and the citizens were not all of them electors. The electoral franchise was everywhere placed within certain limits, and made dependent on a certain qualification, which was exceedingly low in the North and more considerable in the South.

The American Republic broke out, and the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, which had been nurtured in the townships and municipalities, took possession of the State: every class was enlisted in its cause; battles were fought, and victories obtained for it, until it became the law of laws.

A no less rapid change was effected in the interior of society, where the law of descent completed the abolition of local influences.

At the very time when this consequence of the laws and of the Revolution was apparent to every eye, victory was irrevocably pronounced in favor of the democratic cause. All power was, in fact, in its hands, and resistance was no longer possible. The higher orders submitted without a murmur and without a struggle to an evil which was thenceforth inevitable. The ordinary fate of falling powers awaited them; each of their several members followed his own interests; and as it was impossible to wring the power from the hands of a people which they did not detest sufficiently to brave, their only aim was to secure its good-will at any price. The most democratic laws were consequently voted by the very men whose interests they impaired; and thus, although the higher classes did not excite the passions of the people against their order, they accelerated the triumph of the new state of things; so that by a singular change the democratic impulse was found to be most irresistible in the very States where the aristocracy had the firmest hold. The State of Maryland, which had been founded by men of rank, was the first to proclaim universal suffrage, and to introduce the most democratic forms into the conduct of its government.

When a nation modifies the elective qualification, it may easily be foreseen that sooner or later that qualification will be entirely abolished. There is no more invariable rule in the history of society: the further electoral rights are extended, the greater is the need of extending them; for after each concession the strength of the democracy increases, and its demands increase with its strength. The ambition of those who are below the appointed rate is irritated in exact proportion to the great number of those who are above it. The exception at last becomes the rule, concession follows concession, and no stop can be made short of universal suffrage.

At the present day the principle of the sovereignty of the people has acquired, in the United States, all the practical development which the imagination can conceive. It is unencumbered by those fictions which have been thrown over it in other countries, and it appears in every possible form according to the exigency of the occasion. Sometimes the laws are made by the people in a body, as at Athens; and sometimes its representatives, chosen by universal suffrage, transact business in its name, and almost under its immediate control.

In some countries a power exists which, though it is in a degree foreign to the social body, directs it, and forces it to pursue a certain track. In others the ruling force is divided, being partly within and partly without the ranks of the people. But nothing of the kind is to be seen in the United States; there society governs itself for itself. All power centers in its bosom; and scarcely an individual is to be met with who would venture to conceive, or, still less, to express, the idea of seeking it elsewhere. The nation participates in the making of its laws by the choice of its legislators, and in the execution of them by the choice of the agents of the executive government; it may almost be said to govern itself, so feeble and so restricted is the share left to the administration, so little do the authorities forget their popular origin and the power from which they emanate.

IT IS MOST ESPECIALLY in the conduct of foreign relations that democratic governments appear to me to be decidedly inferior to governments carried on upon different principles. Experience, instruction, and habit may almost always succeed in creating a species of practical discretion in democracies, and that science of the daily occurrences of life which is called good sense. Good sense may suffice to direct the ordinary course of society; and among a people whose education has been provided for, the advantages of democratic liberty in the internal affairs of the country may more than compensate for the evils inherent in a democratic government. But such is not always the case in the mutual relations of foreign nations.

Foreign politics demand scarcely any of those qualities which a democracy possesses; and they require, on the contrary, the perfect use of almost all those faculties in which it is deficient. Democracy is favorable to the increase of the internal resources of the State; it tends to diffuse a moderate independence; it promotes the growth of public spirit, and fortifies the respect which is entertained for law in all classes of society; and these are advantages which only exercise an indirect influence over the relations which one people bears to another. But a democracy is unable to regulate the details of an important undertaking, to persevere in a design, and to work out its execution in the presence

of serious obstacles. It cannot combine its measures with secrecy, and it will not await their consequences with patience. These are qualities which more especially belong to an individual or to an aristocracy; and they are precisely the means by which an individual people attains to a predominant position.

If, on the contrary, we observe the natural defects of aristocracy, we shall find that their influence is comparatively innoxious in the direction of the external affairs of a State. The capital fault of which aristocratic bodies may be accused is that they are more apt to contrive their own advantage than that of the mass of the people. In foreign politics it is rare for the interest of the aristocracy to be in any way distinct from that of the people.

The propensity which democracies have to obey the impulse of passion rather than the suggestions of prudence, and to abandon a mature design for the gratification of a momentary caprice, was very clearly seen in America on the breaking out of the French Revolution. It was then as evident to the simplest capacity as it is at the present time that the interest of the Americans forbade them to take any part in the contest which was about to deluge Europe with blood, but which could by no means injure the welfare of their own country. Nevertheless, the sympathies of the people declared themselves with so much violence in behalf of France that nothing but the inflexible character of Washington, and the immense popularity which he enjoyed, could have prevented the Americans from declaring war against England. And even then, the exertions which the austere reason of that great man made to repress the generous but imprudent passions of his fellow-citizens very nearly deprived him of the sole recompense which he had ever claimed—that of his country's love. The majority then reprobated the line of policy which he adopted, and which has since been unanimously approved by the nation. If the Constitution and the favor of the public had not intrusted the direction of the foreign affairs of the country to Washington, it is certain that the American nation would at that time have taken the very measures which it now condemns.

From Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 51–54, 160–62.

APPENDIX B

Time of Decline

ANDREW HACKER

Political scientist Andrew Hacker teaches at Queens College, City University of New York. His book "The End of the American Era," published in 1970, portrays the United States as a declining and ungovernable nation, its citizens inclined toward anarchy, its government "enervated and isolated." His gloomy conclusion about America's role in the world follows.

A WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE is no longer in the American character; and the conviction that this country's beliefs and institutions merit global diffusion is in decline. What was once a nation has become simply an agglomeration of self-concerned individuals; men and women who were once citizens are now merely residents of bounded terrain where birth happens to have placed them.

The remainder of this century will witness a world in turmoil. Revolution and subversion, insurrection and instability, will continue to unsettle American sensibilities. Our dignity will be increasingly affronted by arrogance from unaccustomed sources, and our patience will be strained by ingratitude and enmity from people who once accorded us deference and respect. It will be difficult to be an American on such a planet, especially if we persevere in believing that we have a responsibility to police its recurrent disorders.

A declining nation has two major options: to continue involving itself in overseas adventures or, alternatively, to end its era with some semblance of civility and grace.

The first course would simply carry on the policies of the postwar years, casting the United States as a power committed to superintending much of the world. Relying on our material wealth and modern weaponry, we can persuade ourselves that we have the ability to impose order in far-flung places of our choosing. Deluding ourselves to believe that we have the resources to carry out these commitments, we will try to use men and money and materials to compensate for our declining moral conviction.

Yet repeated failure to achieve our goals will give rise to frustration and resentment. And the danger is that we may abandon not only all efforts at negotiation and diplomacy, but also the policy of limited war. The impulse will arise to finish the job quickly and cleanly: to use our ultimate weapons to destroy, once and for all, the leading powers that

have encouraged half the globe to hate and harass us. If we take this course, it will at least be an admission that the United States has no other means of international influence apart from its military power. The crucial question is how long the American people will tolerate the stalemates that invariably result from our foreign interventions. Our patience may prove less than durable, in which case a swift destruction of major portions of the world will become a more plausible alternative before this century is ended.

The other option is for Americans to acknowledge candidly that we are no longer capable of being a great power. A majority of us would have to admit that our nation is in a stage of moral enervation; that we have no more lessons to impart to others; that the way of life we have created has ceased to be a model for people beyond our borders. Most difficult of all, we would have to concede that we lack the will to carry out a worldwide mission of redemption and reform.

To proceed on this course would evidence an awareness that our nation has a history. Such a decision would at least be enlightened self-interest for a society whose members have abandoned the responsibilities of citizenship and think only of comforts and pleasures. This sort of abdication is by no means unprecedented: virtually every European nation has relinquished its role as a world power and is now content to attend to ordering its domestic arrangements. There is much to be said for being a Denmark or a Sweden, even a Great Britain or France or Italy. Whether Americans will have the good sense and good grace to follow these examples is highly doubtful. Such a country must have the ability to laugh at itself, to admit cheerfully that it is no longer the presence it once was. It must be able to stand by as other nations quarrel and contend, finding ways of conducting its own affairs despite the bellicosity of near and distant neighbors. Such a posture would involve seeing and hearing much that we did not like and granting that there was nothing much we could do about it.

The most obvious counter to a proposal of this order is to point out that once we announce our retirement, the Communists will proceed to take over the world. Not only will they invade or infiltrate scores of vulnerable nations, but the security of the United States itself will be jeopardized. Visions arise of Red divisions flowing down over Canada—like Sherwin-Williams paint—and eventually engulfing Montana and Minnesota.

My rejoinder is that I do not believe Communist intentions include an American invasion. I will say no more than this, if only because my personal judgment on this matter and the viewpoint of those who will disagree can both be supported by "evidence" from recorded statements or examples of actual Communist behavior. But I do have every expectation that revolutionary movements of one sort or another will come

to power in many of the world's underdeveloped areas. What should the United States "do" to prevent or extirpate these eventualities?

Nothing.

Such a stance would at least be realistic. For the United States no longer has the will to be a great international power, just as it is no longer an ascending nation at home. We have arrived at a plateau in our history: the years of middle age and incipient decline. We are now at that turning-point ancient philosophers called *stasis*, a juncture at which it becomes pointless to call for rehabilitation or renewal. Such efforts would take a discipline we do not have, a spirit of sacrifice which has ceased to exist.

America's history as a nation has reached its end. The American people will of course survive; and the majority will continue to exist quite comfortably, at least in the confines of their private lives. But the ties that make them a society will grow more tenuous with each passing year. There will be undercurrents of tension and turmoil, and the only remaining option will be to learn to live with these disorders. For they are not problems that can be solved with the resources we are willing to make available. They are, rather, a condition we must endure.

No purpose is served by seeing this epoch as a moral tragedy. Such a time was bound to come, as it has or will for all nations. That our hour of decline has arrived without forewarning is understandable, for the American people have never developed a feeling for history. We have, on the contrary, been taught that ours would always be a saga of achievements moving ever upward and outward.

Yet despite our habitual optimism, there are signs that some Americans already sense the reality of their condition, even if they are unable to articulate its implications. This bewilderment is also understandable, if only because the American experience has never provided the vision or vocabulary to describe a time of decline. Here, too, we have been instructed that America was different, that what has happened to other nations could never happen to us. Nor can we bring ourselves to believe that our society's foundations may be disintegrating even while its outer surface bears the hallmarks of contentment and material prosperity.

The American people will continue to produce new generations and carry on with the business of life to the best of their individual abilities. Abroad, they will either make peace with a world they cannot master, or they will turn it into a battleground for yet another century of war. Closer to home, however, Americans will learn to live with danger and discomfort, for this condition is the inevitable accompaniment of democracy in its declining years.

From Andrew Hacker, *The End of the American Era* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), pp. 226–31.

APPENDIX C

The Moral Poverty of the West

ALEKSANDR I. SOLZHENITSYN

When the Soviet exile Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn broke his silence of more than two years to address the Harvard University commencement in June 1978, many people expected him to express gratitude to his newly adopted land and praise for Western freedom and tolerance. What they heard instead was a scathing indictment of the moral, social, and political state of the West, in particular of the United States. The following is from that provocative statement, "A World Split Apart."

TODAY'S WESTERN SOCIETY has revealed the inequality between the freedom for good deeds and the freedom for evil deeds. A statesman who wants to achieve something important and highly constructive for his country has to move cautiously and even timidly; thousands of hasty (and irresponsible) critics cling to him at all times; he is constantly rebuffed by parliament and the press. He has to prove that his every step is well-founded and absolutely flawless. Indeed, an outstanding, truly great person who has unusual and unexpected initiatives in mind does not get any chance to assert himself; dozens of traps will be set for him from the beginning. Thus mediocrity triumphs under the guise of democratic restraints.

It is feasible and easy everywhere to undermine administrative power, and it has in fact been drastically weakened in all Western countries. The defense of individual rights has reached such extremes as to make society as a whole defenseless against certain individuals. It is time, in the West, to defend not so much human rights as human obligations.

On the other hand, destructive and irresponsible freedom has been granted boundless space. Society has turned out to have scarce defense against the abyss of human decadence; for example, against the misuse of liberty for moral violence against young people, such as motion pictures full of pornography, crime, and horror. This is all considered to be part of freedom and to be counterbalanced, in theory, by the young people's right not to look and not to accept. Life organized legalistically has thus shown its inability to defend itself against the corrosion of evil.

And what shall we say about the dark realms of overt criminality? Legal limits (especially in the United States) are broad enough to encourage not only individual freedom but also some misuse of such freedom. The culprit can go unpunished or obtain undeserved leniency—

all with the support of thousands of defenders in the society. When a government earnestly undertakes to root out terrorism, public opinion immediately accuses it of violating the terrorists' civil rights.

This tilt of freedom toward evil has come about gradually, but it evidently stems from a humanistic and benevolent concept according to which man—the master of this world—does not bear any evil within himself, and all the defects of life are caused by misguided social systems, which must therefore be corrected. Yet strangely enough, though the best social conditions have been achieved in the West, there still remains a great deal of crime. . . .

No weapons, no matter how powerful, can help the West until it overcomes its loss of will power. In a state of psychological weakness, weapons even become a burden for the capitulating side. To defend oneself, one must also be ready to die; there is little such readiness in a society raised in the cult of material well-being. Nothing is left, in this case, but concessions, attempts to gain time, and betrayal. Thus at the shameful Belgrade conference, free Western diplomats in their weakness surrendered the line of defense for which enslaved members of the Helsinki Watch Groups are sacrificing their lives.

Western thinking has become conservative: the world situation must stay as it is at any cost; there must be no changes. This debilitating dream of a status quo is the symptom of a society that has ceased to develop. But one must be blind in order not to see that the oceans no longer belong to the West, while the land under its domination keeps shrinking. The two so-called world wars (they were by far not on a world scale, not yet) constituted the internal self-destruction of the small progressive West which has thus prepared its own end. The next war (which does not have to be an atomic one; I do not believe it will be) may well bury Western civilization forever.

In the face of such danger, with such historical values in your past, with such a high level of attained freedom and, apparently, a devotion to it, how is it possible to lose to such an extent the will to defend oneself?

How has this unfavorable relation of forces come about? How did the West decline from its triumphal march to its present debility? Have there been fatal turns and losses of direction in its development? It does not seem so. The West kept advancing steadily in accordance with its proclaimed social intentions, hand in hand with a dazzling progress in technology. And all of a sudden it found itself in its present state of weakness.

This means that the mistake must be at the root, at the very foundation of thought in modern times. I refer to the prevailing Western view of the world which was born in the Renaissance and has found political expression since the Age of Enlightenment. It became the basis for political and social doctrine and could be called rationalistic human-

ism or humanistic autonomy: the proclaimed and practiced autonomy of man from any higher force above him. It could also be called anthropocentricity, with man seen as the center of all.

The turn introduced by the Renaissance was probably inevitable historically: the Middle Ages had come to a natural end by exhaustion, having become an intolerable despotic repression of man's physical nature in favor of the spiritual one. But then we recoiled from the spirit and embraced all that is material, excessively and incommensurately. The humanistic way of thinking, which has proclaimed itself our guide, did not admit the existence of intrinsic evil in man, nor did it see any task higher than the attainment of happiness on earth. It started modern Western civilization on the dangerous trend of worshiping man and his material needs. Everything beyond physical well-being and the accumulation of material goods, all other human requirements and characteristics of a subtler and higher nature, were left outside the area of attention of state and social systems, as if human life did not have any higher meaning. Thus gaps were left open for evil, and its drafts blow freely today. Mere freedom per se does not in the least solve all the problems of human life and even adds a number of new ones.

And yet in early democracies, as in American democracy at the time of its birth, all individual human rights were granted on the ground that man is God's creature. That is, freedom was given to the individual conditionally, in the assumption of his constant religious responsibility. Such was the heritage of the preceding one thousand years. Two hundred or even fifty years ago, it would have seemed quite impossible, in America, that an individual be granted boundless freedom with no purpose, simply for the satisfaction of his whims. Subsequently, however, all such limitations were eroded everywhere in the West; a total emancipation occurred from the moral heritage of Christian centuries with their great reserves of mercy and sacrifice. State systems were becoming ever more materialistic.

The West has finally achieved the rights of man, and even to excess, but man's sense of responsibility to God and society has grown dimmer and dimmer. In the past decades, the legalistic selfishness of the Western approach to the world has reached its peak, and the world has found itself in a harsh spiritual crisis and a political impasse. All the celebrated technological achievements of progress, including the conquest of outer space, do not redeem the twentieth century's moral poverty, which no one could have imagined even as late as the nineteenth century.

From Ronald Berman, ed., *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard: The Address, Twelve Early Responses, and Six Later Reflections* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1980), pp. 8–9, 15–17; English translation of text © 1979 by Harper & Row and reprinted there by permission.

APPENDIX D

The Threat From Within

GEORGE F. KENNAN

In an influential 1947 article the distinguished diplomat and scholar George Kennan enunciated the "containment" doctrine of confronting the Soviets "with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching." In later years he seemed to change his views on East-West relations and to question whether Western society was worth defending. The following excerpts are from a 1976 interview with Kennan conducted by George Urban and from an essay by Kennan in the same year.

KENNAN: My main reason for advocating a gradual and qualified withdrawal from far-flung foreign involvements is that we have nothing to teach the world. We have to confess that we have not got the answers to the problems of human society in the modern age. Moreover, every society has specific qualities of its own that we in America do not understand very well; therefore I don't want to see us put in a position of taking responsibility for the affairs of people we do not comprehend. I would like to see us influence the world, if we can, by the power of our example to the extent that other people wish to follow it and find it applicable to themselves. But I have, as you know, always very emphatically rejected the concept of the universality of the American experience. Our national experience was never shared by any country and will never be shared by any country in the future. Never again will it be given to a national society to develop a vast, unpopulated area in the northern, temperate zone of the world. Think of the potential wealth of this continent, and the way in which people harnessed it to their needs, and also devastated, by their greed, its lakes and forests and seaboards. All this wealth and space presented possibilities in America which have made the American outlook unique, and therefore inapplicable to any other society.

URBAN: It has fallen to the United States to lead the world, but the United States can offer no leadership. Isn't this, too, an almost unique fact in history?

KENNAN: Leadership cannot be given for the two reasons we have already mentioned: (1) because the United States has nothing much to say to the outside world, and (2) because the kind of government we

have does not permit, even if we *had* a valid message to impart, the shaping of that message into a consistently pursued foreign policy.

I had the experience some years ago of making a call on one of the African leaders who shall be nameless. The meeting was arranged by some of my friends—I wasn't myself very anxious that it should take place.

"I appreciate your receiving me," I said to this African leader, "but I am embarrassed; my friends asked me to call on you, yet I have nothing to say to you and I don't think my country should either."

"What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"I hesitate to say anything, partly because I think we have no answer to your problem, and partly because I feel anything said would be misinterpreted—that is the atmosphere growing up around us." However, he pressed me to say something. "What do you think the United States ought to do with regard to us?" I was asked.

"Leave you absolutely and strictly alone," I said. "If I had anything to do with it, you would have no cause to complain that the United States took any interest in you except at your own insistent request. Other than that we would leave you absolutely in peace."

He threw back his head and laughed: "You can't do that—you are caught here—you can't opt out."

But I don't think we are necessarily caught in Africa, or anywhere else for that matter. We should, for a start, proceed roughly like this: if people from the developing world came to us with requests saying "We want this or that from you by way of help or advice," I would first ask them: "Why do you think we ought to give these things?" And if we did give them, I would say: "We want it to be firmly documented that these things were given at your request, your initiative, not ours." This would prevent a great many misunderstandings about American neo-colonialism, imperialism, and the like. Incidentally, this is the way we ought to have behaved to De Gaulle in the years of his power.

URBAN: I am not sure that your African leader's cry, "You are caught," is all that far-fetched. Raymond Aron remarks in his recent book on the American reluctance to bear the burdens of hegemony: "One cannot help wondering at times whether the American republic will ever attain maturity and whether it will at length realize that power implies rights and duties—limited rights and permanent duties."

In a sense I am more worried about your insistence that the United States has nothing to say to the world than by the nature of the American system which, as you say, inhibits the United States from putting across whatever it may have to say to the world. After all, the latter *may* be open to reform, whereas the evaporation of American self-confidence is probably beyond repair in the foreseeable future.

What I have more particularly in mind is something you have, I know, always roundly condemned: the idealistic, moralizing streak in the American self-image and American foreign policy. While, in 1976, this may strike one as arrogant or unsophisticated, it has, in the past 150 years, certainly been one of the great assets of American foreign policy. The examples one could cite to support this assertion are so numerous, especially from Czarist Russia and eastern and southern Europe, where the promise of America was most widely appreciated, that I shall simply state the fact, wondering whether, if your policy of what one might call American "self-containment" were here to stay, the United States would not be depriving itself of its entire historic magnetism.

KENNAN: If the idealistic component in American policy *has* ever been a force in its own right, it has been confused and really nullified by the crimes and mistakes of recent years: by Vietnam, by the stupidities of the CIA, by the violation of the democratic process as witnessed by Watergate, and so forth. It would take a long period of withdrawal, a quiet time of minding our own business and rethinking our national purpose, to persuade the world that we had, *if* we had, anything worth while to say to it. . . .

KENNAN: I am not denying that the outlooks and policies and professed purposes of the Soviet leadership present serious problems for Western statesmanship—problems which demand their most thoughtful and responsible attention. But I am saying that this is nothing new—that things have been this way for over half a century. And I am saying that Western statesmen will not be aided, in their effort to cope with this problem, by persuading themselves that what they have to contend with is some new and menacing departure in Soviet diplomacy and strategy. They will not be aided by trying to blame the Soviet government for changes in the balance of political forces that are overwhelmingly the consequences of the failures of Western society itself. They will not be aided by first neglecting the development of their own conventional forces and then blaming the Soviet government because the military balance runs in Western Europe's disfavor.

Poor old West: succumbing feebly, day by day, to its own decadence, sliding into debility on the slime of its own self-indulgent permissiveness; its drugs, its crime, its pornography, its pampering of the youth, its addiction to its bodily comforts, its rampant materialism and consumerism—and then trembling before the menace of the wicked Russians, all pictured as supermen, eight feet tall, their internal problems

all essentially solved, and with nothing else now to think about except how to bring damage and destruction to Western Europe. This persistent externalization of the sense of danger—this persistent exaggeration of the threat from without and blindness to the threat from within: this is the symptom of some deep failure to come to terms with reality—and with one's self. If Western Europe could bring itself to think a little less about how defenseless it is in the face of the Russians, and a little more about what it is that it has to defend, I would feel more comfortable about its prospects for the future.

From Martin F. Herz, ed., *Decline of the West? George Kennan and His Critics* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1978), pp. 18–20, 8–9; reprinted there by permission from *Encounter*, September 1976, and *Freedom at Issue*, September–October 1976.

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